Mercier, Cardinal (Speech by Falconer, presenting Mercier for LLD) 1919-20 (073)

University of Toronto

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

We are honouring to-day one of the heroic figures of the war. The visit of His Eminence Cardinal Mercier calls forth anew our feelings of admiration for him which were maintained throughout that protracted ordeal, when along with the King and Queen of the Belgians he saved his people by giving them a heart of courage. Among his enemies he stood like a rock in the midst of raging waves which vainly attempted to engulf him. Silence him they could not, and at intervals his voice would sound forth over the tumult of war in majestic but impassioned protest which not only put iron into the soul of the agonised nation but touched the heart and conscience of the allied world.

When his words did not avail to check the ruthless deportations he rallied a band of patriots to alleviate as far as possible the distress of those who were being torn away from their homes, and thus by action as by speech his powerful sympathy became the comfort of his fellow-sufferers.

But the Cardinal is not only a great national figure. He is also a scholar of repute. His work as a professor of philosophy in the ancient but now ravaged University of Louvain was widely influential and even startling in its originality, and from the academic chair he was called to the administrative duties of the leading Archbishopric of Belgium. In honouring him to-day therefore

we recognise one who is worthy because of his intellectual attainments.

It will doubtless be interesting to his Eminence to know that in this University there is a unique federation of Colleges which are constituent parts of the Faculty of Arts. In one or other of these Colleges every undergraduate proceeding to the Bachelor of Arts degree must register, and be under its discipline. All the Colleges give instruction in the same subjects: Latin, Greek, English, French, German, Oriental Languages, Philosophy, and their students without the payment of an extra fee are at liberty to take non-collegiate instruction - as in the sciences especially - from the

University. But the University through its Council and Senate on which the Colleges are represented sets the curriculum, holds the examinations and grants the degrees. One of these Colleges is St. Michael's. It has fitted itself without friction into the established federation and is prospering and growing rapidly, the enrolment this year being . I will ask the Superior of St. Michael's College, Rev. Father Carr, to present His Eminence for the degree.

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